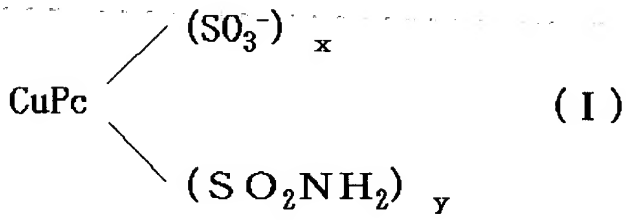
IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 10 and 14-17 and add new Claim 18, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An aqueous ink comprising a phthalocyanine dye represented by a general formula (I) and an aqueous medium, wherein the phthalocyanine dye does not contain a component of x + y = 2 but at least contains components ~~being~~ of x + y = 3 and x + y = 4, a content of the component of x + y = 4 is larger than a content of the component of x + y = 3, and the aqueous medium contains an amine compound having a vapor pressure of 0.01 mmHg or higher at 20 - 25°C:



wherein CuPc represents a copper phthalocyanine residue; x represents 1, 2, 3 or 4 and y ~~represent~~ represents 0, 1, 2 or 3.

2. (Original) The aqueous ink according to claim 1, wherein, in a high-pressure liquid chromatography analysis at a detection wavelength of 254 nm, a peak

height A of a component of $x + y = 4$ and a peak height B of a component of $x + y = 3$ satisfy a relation $A/B > 1$.

3. (Original) The aqueous ink according to claim 2, wherein A/B is 1.5 or higher.

4. (Original) The aqueous ink according to claim 1, wherein the amine compound is 2-pyrrolidone.

5. (Original) The aqueous ink according to claim 1, further comprising a glycol having a vapor pressure of 0.01 mmHg or higher at 20 - 25°C.

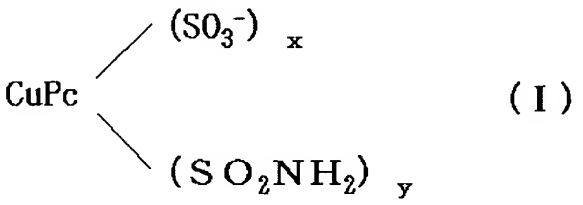
6. (Original) The aqueous ink according to claim 5, wherein the glycol is ethylene glycol.

7. (Original) The aqueous ink according to claim 1, wherein the ink is for ink jet recording.

8. (Original) The aqueous ink according to claim 1, wherein the ink has a viscosity within a range of 1 to 5 mPa·s.

9. (Original) The aqueous ink according to claim 8, wherein the ink has a viscosity within a range of 1 to 2.5 mPa·s.

10. (Currently Amended) An ink jet recording method comprising a step of discharging an aqueous ink onto a recording medium by an ink jet method, wherein the aqueous ink comprises a phthalocyanine dye represented by a general formula (I) and an aqueous medium, the phthalocyanine dye does not contain a component of $x + y = 2$ but at least contains components ~~being~~ of $x + y = 3$ and $x + y = 4$, a content of the component of $x + y = 4$ is larger than a content of the component of $x + y = 3$, and the aqueous medium contains an amine compound having a vapor pressure of 0.01 mmHg or higher at 20 - 25°C:



wherein CuPc represents a copper phthalocyanine residue; x represents 1, 2, 3 or 4 and y ~~represent~~ represents 0, 1, 2 or 3.

11. (Original) The ink jet recording method according to claim 10, wherein the recording medium has an ink receiving layer on a substrate.

12. (Original) The ink jet recording method according to claim 11, wherein the ink receiving layer contains a silica compound.

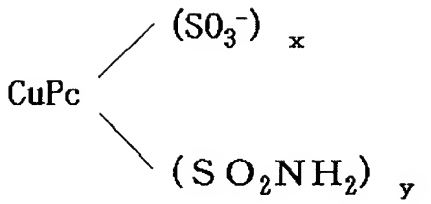
13. (Original) The ink jet recording method according to claim 11, wherein the ink receiving layer contains an alumina hydrate.

14. (Currently Amended) The ink jet recording method according to claim 13, wherein the alumina hydrate is represented by a following formula:

$Al_2O_{3-n}(OH)_{2n} \cdot mH_2O$ ~~(III)~~

wherein n represents an integer 1, 2 or 3; m represents a value of 0 to 10, however m and n ~~do~~ are not ~~become~~ 0 at the same time.

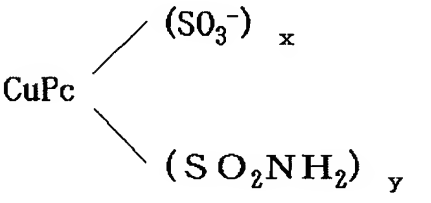
15. (Currently Amended) An ink tank comprising an ink holding portion containing an aqueous ink, wherein the aqueous ink comprises a phthalocyanine dye represented by a general formula (I) and an aqueous medium, the phthalocyanine dye does not contain a component of $x + y = 2$ but at least contains components of $x + y = 3$ and $x + y = 4$, a content of the component of $x + y = 4$ is larger than a content of the component of $x + y = 3$, and the aqueous medium contains an amine compound having a vapor pressure of 0.01 mmHg or higher at 20 - 25°C:



(I)

wherein CuPc represents a copper phthalocyanine residue; x represents 1, 2, 3 or 4 and y ~~represent~~ represents 0, 1, 2 or 3.

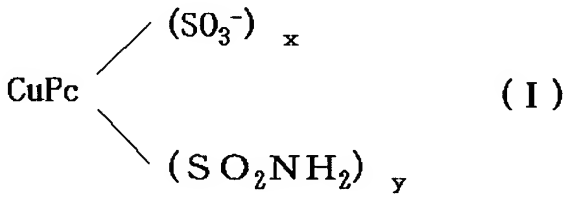
16. (Currently Amended) A recording unit comprising an aqueous ink and an ink jet recording head for discharging the aqueous ink, wherein the aqueous ink comprises a phthalocyanine dye represented by a general formula (I) and an aqueous medium, the phthalocyanine dye does not contain a component of x + y = 2 but at least contains components of x + y = 3 and x + y = 4, a content of the component of x + y = 4 is larger than a content of the component of x + y = 3, and the aqueous medium contains an amine compound having a vapor pressure of 0.01 mmHg or higher at 20 - 25°C:



(I)

wherein CuPc represents a copper phthalocyanine residue; x represents 1, 2, 3 or 4 and y ~~represent~~ represents 0, 1, 2 or 3.

17. (Currently Amended) An ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for discharging an ~~the~~ aqueous ink, wherein the aqueous ink comprises a phthalocyanine dye represented by a general formula (I) and an aqueous medium, the phthalocyanine dye does not contain a component of x + y = 2 but at least contains components of x + y = 3 and x + y = 4, a content of the component of x + y = 4 is larger than a content of the component of x + y = 3, and the aqueous medium contains an amine compound having a vapor pressure of 0.01 mmHg or higher at 20 - 25°C:



(I)

wherein CuPc represents a copper phthalocyanine residue; x represents 1, 2, 3 or 4 and y ~~represent~~ represents 0, 1, 2 or 3.

18. (New) The aqueous ink according to claim 1, wherein the amine compound has a vapor pressure of 12 mmHg or lower at 20 - 25°C.